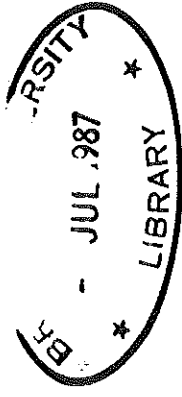


MRS. N. BEATIN,
V. TORWICK HILTED LODGE,
WOLDWORTH ROAD, WELLS IN BRISTOL.

Last night I was back again - in
that awful land - "the land - so called -
"Of Saints & Scholars", I was a child
again. My father called it the land of hills & long
they say there is a destiny that shapes
our ends but what of the in between,
the crushed dreams & broken hearts -
fate - certainly was in cruel mood when
my father decided to return there.
The ever recurring nightmares of
those days will remain as long as
memory is left.

I wish I could write the story
of those days, the story of a long
& lonely road.

They say you pick your own road -
perhaps - fate took over so often I
doubt it but one thing it did do,
I swore no child of mine would
ever suffer as I suffered & I



2-872.

what eventually happened ^{was} the result of those days. First you would have to know the child to understand the woman, yet after all these years I do not understand her myself.

My first "crime" was being born too soon after my brother, the second, was to be born a girl & followed too soon by other brothers in rapid succession.

You would think being ~~as~~ the only girl I would be petted & pampered, in fact I was resented, if anything was wrong - it was my fault even if I had no idea what had happened & often punished & not knowing why.

I expect I was a trying child.

My Mother was a pretty woman - very

- clean & smart - I can never remember seeing her dirty - she was an introvert English woman - I can never remember her taking me in her arms & kissing me - she kept us clean & fed & that was that.

My father was a handsome Irish extrovert, he would often take me on his lap & sing - he had a good voice & he loved rock songs as "Love little girls in blue" "When Irish eyes are smiling" & "My little grey dove in the west", that was before the war - the war that was to end all wars.

He was never out of work - he worked hard & long hours - when he went out for a drink my Mother went too, they did not spend long hours away & while they were away the older

children watched over the younger ones. Life was bearable - that was until a letter came from "somewhere in France".

The war had been on for a ~~few~~^{few months} when it came - Pa went to work as usual but when he came home he was drunk - he sat by the shed in the garden, Ma went out to him, I followed; he looked up

bleary eyed & said, " "

"I have taken the Queen's shilling, "

For a moment Ma was speechless

then she said, ^{angrily} ~~angrily~~

"And what do you think I'm going

to do with six children, "

He answered "I'm not going to be

called a coward". Then went to sleep

Ma walked away & made me go

to bed; the letter had come from Uncle Matt. Within a week Pa was away & life was never the same again, money was short - the army allowance left nothing for luxuries in fact, it was not adequate for living on.

When it was pea picking time we went pea picking, when that finished

Ma took sewing in & saw she did

until she could ^{not} see it, later she

took in soldiers washing - I had to

help mangle & mend also collect & return

it with my brother, the soldiers

would sometimes give us sweets so

it was one of the pleasant sides

to the job & it was 8 years old

So life went on until Grandpa

became ill & Pa came home on leave,

A few days later Ma was crying

it was the first time I had

seen her cry, Grandpa was dead.

Grandpa was a kindly ^{little} man, he came & dug our garden & planted it & he often gave us a penny & Penny was a fortune - when he died we lost a good friend. Pa returned soon after the funeral Pa returned to his unit & we were once again on our own.

Xmas drew near we went carol singing - the nights were crisp & cold, the moon shone brightly & there was a fluttering of snow - none of us could sing, I think we were often given a Penny to go away - we discovered a road - it was good - that was until we over-did it & went there for the fourth time in a week, we marched up to the door & started "Doel Doel", the door opened sharply, a man stood there, very

angry - "No Hell - No Hell", he shouted "It's all Hell around here", we took to our heels & never went back again, in fact it rather put us off of going out again.

We hung up our stockings ^{on} Xmas Eve, next morning they had an apple an orange & some nuts in them,

we did not expect Father Xmas to bring us a bag of toys. One ^{thing} to give us a punishment, gum ball shells ^{he said you get} a came home once more for a short time & when he went back we would receive packets of postcards, one for each of us, the writing was always the same "Dear -

be a good little boy/girl, until I come home again & help naming - all you - can, once - he asked me to pray to St Anthony for his safe return - each day after I would

So into the church a ray a ³ prayer,
just, Dear God let Daddy come home
safe". Later I wished he never had come home,
Post cards came from France of before
& after the shelling - then later from
Gibraltar, Malta, Egypt, Salonica &
finally stopped for a long time.
During this time my mother was very
worried she had no idea what was
wrong, then one day about six months
later she received a letter & snap
of him - he was propped up in
bed, he looked very ill, he was
in hospital in Bombay & would
soon be coming back to England.
My first sister had arrived by
now & she was five months old, &
was eleven & could not understand
why my mother wanted so many

children - she was a very sweet baby
& always attracted people & they
made a great fuss of her, & had
no feeling much one way or another
it was just another baby to
look after.
My Aunt came to stay one week-end
& Ma went away taking the baby
& my youngest brother, when she came
back she told us she had been to
see Pa & he would soon be home
again - he had strained the valves
of his heart & was convalescing
in Wiltshire.
I went away for 2 weeks & when
I returned every where was chaos.
Pa was home - when he learnt he
had not long to live & must live
quietly he decided to go back

"Home" to die & if it was going to be a short life it would be a joy one.

We were to go to Ireland for three months holiday, I was thrilled - we had heard such a lot about Ireland, the lakes full of fish, the bogs, the hills & my Grandparents, the joy of it, three whole months in Ireland on holiday.

That was where the nightmare

began.

Pa had a ferret, a black & white rabbit & a Belgian hare, the ferret was put in a cage & well covered with brown paper - the rabbits were put in boxes - my brothers were in charge of the rabbits - I, the ferret & on no 9

account was to let anyone know what was in the eye, if anyone wants to know say its a parrot," said Pa.

It was a fine day when we left our lovely little bungalow with the old apple tree in the front garden but we were all too excited to feel regret, each of us carried a bag, box or case, Ma the baby & Pa held the hand of Joe - for little Joe.

Just the same to see us off - she waved until we were out of sight - Ma said it was unlucky to see some one out of sight - we never saw her again, she was only eighteen - two years later she died in childbirth.

We had to change from one train to another at London, somehow we were kept together & finally we were on our way again.

The train rumbled through the night 13

When we stopped at Rugby, Pa bought some tea, before we all had some the train started & Pa was nearly left behind.

I must have slept because my father was shaking me, "Come on," he said, "look here's the ship."

We were slowly pulling into the station, a very large ship was just across from the train, Pa leaped as up the gangway onto the ship - there we were told we must go below, hanging on to the cage with one hand & the side of the stairway with the other I followed the others.

A Steward brought some mattresses in, putting them on the floor we were told we must lie down - we put our boxes down at the head of the mattresses the ferritt started to scrawl at "

the paper Pa took it away, I believe he went to the mens wash room & fed it - when he brought it back it was quiet.

Pa said the ship was full - soldiers & sailors were going home or leave also nurses & families like ourselves.

The ship rumbled & rattled - as we left the harbour, we settled down to sleep,

It must have been an hour or more across the channel when Pa came down to see if we were alright, the ~~stoppe~~ ship had stopped - he said we were all to keep very quiet as there was a submarine in the vicinity & it was some time before it started again.

As we came towards land Pa took us up on deck, he pointed to the "distant shore" Pa said, "There's Ireland!"

We watched the land draw closer, the ship finally stopped, although my stomach didn't and I felt sick, Ma said "Don't be sick now", I was not sick then but it was many a day before relief came and the nausea left me.

The only difference between the departure & arrival was the brogue - everyone spoke as Pa spoke but with so many speaking at once it was like a foreign tongue. The boat train was full, we could not find a carriage where we could remain together so Pa said, "Get in where you can."

I started off down the platform looking into each compartment until at last there was a space - opening the door I struggled with the cage, I went in and sat on the only vacant seat

between a young lady & a sailor - the young sailor was eating some sandwiches, after a short time he offered me some.

Ma had said, "Don't take anything from strangers," so I said, "No thank you."

He did not look like a poisoner but Ma probably knew best.

He then asked if he could put the cage on the rack - once again it was, "No thank you," he asked if it was a parrot, I nodded, that was not like telling a lie, "Does it speak," a shake of the head, he then gave up trying to be friendly, he looked out of the window.

The train was moving slowly, there was water on either side.

We had to change trains again at Dublin & then we were all together again. Sure! Ireland's fields are green but the fields were no greener than England's the trees.

were the same as the trees we had left, only the brown bogs with their heaps of stacked turps & the whitewashed farmhouses with the thatched roofs dotted here & there along the country side were different - chickens & ducks roamed at will also pigs & cattle, an occasional squeal from a pig or a Moo from a cow and the rattle of the train could be heard.

Pa pointed out things he thought would interest us but we soon got tired & I must have slept - as I opened my eyes we were pulling into Limerick Junction - there we had quite a wait until the Cork train arrived.

How my Mother managed on that journey I shall never know - my father was

happy, he was stone again. The stacked corn was rotting in the fields, Pa said they must have had a lot of rain to do that.

Limerick Station is gloomy even on a sunny day, a strange cold seems to enter your heart when you arrive. Station Rd is or was dirty & smelt of half bad meat - the shops all seemed to sell offal, pigs heads hung from the snout & legs of pork, there were flies everywhere.

Women with black shawls - some with babies wrapped in them - only the faces showing of Mother & child - most wore heavy shoes or boots - some walked by the side of an ass & cart - all seemed to walk with a long stride like a man.

Children were sitting on the path most

had chitzy faces hands & feet, all were barefooted, the great unwashed; The ferret was begining to scratch the paper again - you could just see a little pink nose through the spot it had torn.

"We are nearly there", said Pa & Ma gave a sigh of relief.

Uncle Tim's shop was part grocery & part pub - large & gloomy - there were wooden seats around the sides of the pub part & we all sat down, Pa bought some drinks for us & he & Ma had a Guinness each, Uncle Lin came down stairs he shook hands with each one of us & then took us up - stairs to the house part - his house-keeper prepared a meal for us.

My father & his uncle had a lot to talk about - me - children were brought

up to be seen but not heard, we listened - there were the days of the "troubles", so far they had not made any difference to Uncle Lin, Ma asked if she could give us all a wash & we all felt repessted -after.

We could not understand some of the brouge & they could not understand some of what we said, Pa had to translate, we were in a strange land but he was in his glory, he was Home again.

About 2-30 we were on our way back to Limerick Station - the children were still on the pathway - they just looked, the women were far fewer than when we had arrived also the darley & carts had disappeared.

The train for Sixmiltbridge stood by the

platform & once again we were around it made two stops before we finally reached Sixmilebridge where Uncle John was to pick us up with the horse & car but when we arrived there was no sign of Uncle John or anyone else to meet us & we waited for a short time then Pa said, "He will be down at b'Regans, so we all started walking, when we reached the village the river was in full flood - planks had been placed ^{across the road} so the people could walk across - one by one we crossed Pa thought this was why John had not been at the station to meet us, he was sure we would find him at b'Regans but when we got there there was no John. We went into b'Regans, there was only one man there, Pa started to talk

to him - he told him he was expecting his brother to pick us up, he told Pa all he had was a reel if it was any help he would give some of us a lift - we wouldn't all fit in it, he was not going to Kilkishan. Pa accepted the offer for as far as he could take us off we were put into the reel - that is a cart with four slotted sides that they used for turf & calves or pigs for transportation the boxes were used for seats & some of us sat on the floor Ma & Pa walked with the man, I held the baby.

So this is Ireland;

We must have travelled several miles before the man called Stephen stopped "This is as far as I can take them" he said & we were handed out again.

There was another four miles to go before we would reach Kilkishen - to our small legs it's seemed more like forty. We passed a row of cottages - called Derra - a big house here & there - then at last we were in Kilkishen.

My brave John sat with his pint in Miss Ebnier's Pa said, "where in the name of God have you been John, we have expected Sammiebridge." All John said was "Why didn't ye wait a bit longer, then looking at us he said, "Lame of God, where - do you think we are going to put all them."

Pa said, "Ah! we will find some place if it's only the cow house." I had visions of having to sleep with the cows.

Miss Ebnier took us into her parlour & made tea, bread butter, - cakes &

bricnits, Ma suckled the baby & drank another Guinness, "Will we ever get there," she groaned, we were all tired by now after what seemed an age John put us all on the cart - he said we would not have fitted in the trap, he was right there - we just sat on each other, it was an awful journey.

The sun was going down when we reached Cullane lake, Pa pointed it out & the turret across the water he said if you went to the turret you would see another from there as they were once used for fighting from, now they were ruins.

We were still looking across the lake when John took a sharp right turn, not expecting this, we nearly fell off the cart.

The road was just a lane with no room for another cart to pass, one

would have to go back to a gate - way before the other could pass, the banks were covered with bracken & beyond the bank a rough rock wall - one big rock placed on another - here & there a few bushes or a bit of gorse.

In the field were a couple of goats. The old road was nearly a mile long about half way down we were about to pass a house when a woman ran out saying, "Welcome Home Jimmy! & isn't it the grand family you have, welcome Mrs how are you", by before she could be answered she added, laughing "Where will they fit!":

John refused to stop longer he said, "The Mother will be waiting, & tugged at the reins.

It was almost dark as we pulled into the farm yard - it was cobbled stoned - one house was at the side

of the yard & another farm house at the top of the slope, across the yard a large barn, a cowhouse, hen house & a pigsty.

Every thing seemed huge - the kitchen with a great glowing fire on the flat hearth, a great black pot stood on three legs, coals of turf pushed around it to keep it boiling was full of potatoes, a big black kettle hung from a hook over the fire & a big brown enamel teapot also stood by the fire.

The table, a family table was pulled into the middle of the kitchen around it were several chairs - scrubbed white seats & made of a hay rope - called "rugans".

A "settle" bed by the wall - by day it was a wooden seat - at night it opened up to make an extra bed.

A large dresser filled with shining plates - cups hung from hooks & three

large home made loaves stood on their sides, at one end.

The table had been laid before we arrived.

The elderly man stood by the fire, he was tall & straight, with a well trimmed beard, he was smoking a pipe, he came forward with outstretched hand - "Welcome home Jimmy," he said to Pa, then shook hands with each one & asking our names.

A little old lady was fussing around she also shook our hands but when it came to me she gave me a strange look, it was not a kind look, I did not know then that I looked like her young girl daughter who had brought disgrace by running away with a young farmer who she disapproved of but she never forgave me for reminding her of our dislike for each other never changed.

She told us to sit up to the table

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which was piled with food but the bread was "black" bread, as at that time the flour was very bad, I could not eat it and asked if I could have a potato from the large black pot - she said, "I meanly party," meaning I was a spoilt brat.

Dick was a young man about 25, he picked out some nice potatoes - peeled & washed them with a load of butter, they were lovely & each day while I was there he did the same.

Mamma was worried because she had never known me to refuse food before but

I was quite happy with plenty of "spuds" an egg & milk, even the "baker's" bread bought from Lulla failed to make me eat bread, Dick said, "If she wants spuds let her have spuds,

So I had upset Grandma as soon as

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I had arrived.
The young lady from next door said I could spend the nights there as there was no room for a girl - with all those boys - she ~~was~~ ^{just} called ^{me} "Babby", although she had been christened "Mary Ann".

Great day Babby asked if I would like to go with her to Lulla, I was delighted.
She harnessed the ass & cart & we set off, sitting on a board across the middle of the cart, we bumped with every stone & hole.
We were half way down the "Old Road", when Babby said, "Hold it a minute & want to fire", I wondered what she meant, she hopped off the cart & I watched with amazement as she spread her feet apart & passed water,

I watched it splash & trickle, it was the first time I had ever seen a grown up do this, "That's better," she said as she hopped up on to the cart again.

I really should not have been surprised as the day before when I had asked where the Lavatory ^{was}, I had been taken to the door & down the fields & told, "Go behind any wall or the haggard as we all do," & to my request for paper the reply was, "Use a sop of hay or a dock leaf."

Well, we set off again - when ever Babby met some one she would stop for a gossip & always introduce me, "As the little English girl", once or twice some one would say, "Don't she like Mary", once, after passing this remark some one had added, "That won't please 'Old Tor'"; I had been named after this Grandm

I hated the name - so much so that when at school in England I used my second name, it caused complications, when I had won a certificate, with eleven others for the best compositions in the whole school it bore Kathleen. But somehow that other name still stuck, over the years I tried again without avail, the name Donah seemed so cold so bleak a name - now if had been "Cora or Laura" that would have been different. Babby was a happy soul, shiny red face, inclined to be on the stout side, she had a hearty & ready laugh. When the shopping & chatting were over we started for home, Babby no longer peered at the asses ~~tail~~ tail to make it run, it was allowed to walk as the cart was well laden with sacks of flour & meal for the pigs.

Babby had a couple of calls to make on friends at one house she queried the health of "Old Shemus" & on being

he could not last long - she said, "We'll have a great night when he goes," I asked, "Will you have a dance," they roared with laughter as they answered "Not quite; but it will be a good wake."

Further along the road Babby said, "I must call on Mrs Gandy, her girls went back last night."

As we pulled into the yard a man came out of the house, a man who looked a bit funny, he stood cap in hand, "What's the matter," asked Babby, he seemed unable to answer, then at last he said, "The ship was sunk last night and her two girls were on it," Babby blessed herself, too stunned to speak, we went into the house.

A grey haired woman sat by the fire repenting over & over again, "My two lovely girls, I asked them not to go back," they were young nurses who had been on leave & had insisted that they must return

to their hospital - both were drowned.
Bobby could not get home quick enough to
tell the awful tragedy.
Pa was shocked as he heard & said, "That
was the ship we came over on the 'Linsler',
Grandma said we were lucky but that she
had prayed for our safe arrival & Pa
said there had been a submarine in the
channel, we could have been the victims."

Several families were hit by the big boom
& it was the sole topic ^{of conversation} for weeks.
A few days after our arrival at the farm
Grandma told Pa to send me to Delia, as
there was no room for me there & Delia
had two girls, she ~~not only~~ ^{had} "five boys
of her own but a stepson & a boy
from an orphanage."

Delia was known better as "Mam" & I
knew her later as "Mam" too.
Next day the pony & trap was harnessed
& we set off - just Ma, Pa, the baby

& I.

When we arrived Mam gave us a great
welcome, she had spent a couple of years
in England before she had gone home
& had a "match" made for her with
a widower with a small son.

She was about the only one who ever
understood my mother & what she must
have been going through.

She asked Pa what he intended doing,
as she knew it would be an im-
possible position for Ma - Pa said he
would get a little cottage to rent, Mam
said it was almost out of the question
as ^{collapsing} ^{men} ^{from} ^{father} ^{to}
see & all were spoken for long before they
were empty, Pa just said "God is good."

When Pa asked if I could stay she said "
"Sure! she will be company for the girls,"

Ma explained I had not been eating, she
just said, "She will soon eat with my gang."

At first Mam sent for biscuits for me
but when I gave them to the rest

of the children she said, "Right, you want
spuds well spuds you can have," so for
weeks I had just potatoes washed in
butter, eggs & milk; they must have been
a well balanced diet because I put on
weight, started to grow & look healthy.
I went to the village school with my cousins,
at first I was put with my age group,
in a few days I was moved to the top
group, I had no trouble with arithmetic,
composition or sewing but my writing was bad.
I was an inquisitive child, asking many
questions, some they could not or would not
answer, I wanted to know how this or that
was done, one of these things was how the
"Angans" were made from hay, so the day
Cissie & I were going home from school a
Littleton was making one I had to watch.
Cissie had seen it all before, she was
not interested, she kept saying, "Come on
Mam will be mad if we are late,"

But then Mrs Littleton looked up from
feeding the hay in the rope as his
assistant twisted a rod and said, "So
you are the little English girl, come in
& see my lads." I was fascinated by the
way the rope just grew & grew.
Mrs Littleton insisted we wait & have
some tea, Cissie said we must go home
but it was all ready so we stayed.
When we left it was growing dark
Cissie kept saying, "Mam will be mad," &
sure enough she was, "Ted" her husband
& two of the boys were ready to leave
to search for us.
Mam looked around for her stick saying
"I'll shake the daylight's out of you both,"
we both made for the bedroom & under
the bed, Mam came into the room & she
"shaked" backward & forward with her
stick although she knew she had no hope
of catching us as we were as far

as we could get under the big bed, Lisa kept away from me after that day, Paddy who was mine & Margaret who was four were my faithful allies.

Two weeks passed before I again thumbed my copy book.

My step-cousin & cousin Tim borrowed my Father's ferret & a bag of nets to go rabbiting - when they set off I followed them, I only wanted to see what happened, they told me to go home & I promised that as soon as one rabbit came out I would do so but none came out - after a while Paddy & Margaret came to say Mam said - come home, but instead they followed too - not one rabbit would come from its burrow or they had all evacuated before we got there.

Anyway it was some time later the clouds started to gather & we were miles from home, Twicko, my step-cousin said - so before we got caught in

rain - we were in the middle of the bog, no shelter of any kind, so we started run back - too late, the rain bucketed down & we were soon drenched, then it stopped as quickly as it had started. We ran until we reached the old cow house, first we took Margret's clothes off & squeezed the water from them we about to start on our own when we heard Mam, first calling ~~me~~ & then the other of us, we peeped through the window & there was Mam, a long, long hayed rod wagging in front of her, she said as she came in saw we were not hurt & then let rip with the rod, she made for our legs & as the rod ~~came~~ came around we jumped & then jumped again as it made its way back.

I never remembered how we got out of the cow house or whether we jumped the gate or wall, Mam was shouting "Stop them Ted" Ted was thatching the

roof, he pretended to come down, I did not want to see how far he came down.

'dirty' there was a clothes press in the kitchen, the bottom had a panel out of the side, a hen used to go in ^{at} to lay her eggs in the dirty linen, I hopped into the press, the blamed hen was there before me & with a loud squawk she went through the hole.

Mam - came into the kitchen she was saying, "where is she, have you seen her?" she is more trouble than all of you; then she said, "She will have to go home." The thought of Grandma was too much, I promised myself not to disobey again but everything was such a challenge.

In later years Mam laughed heartily about those days she about the day she went to buy & we made some toffee, there was always a stone of sugar in the house ^{at} ₃₇

that was no better, the toffee turned out good we had also bread it with a bottle of syrup of figs to give it flavour, we kept a piece for Mam but how she laughed next day as one by one we made tracks for the haystack.

Saturday night was bath night, the wooden wash tub was brought into the kitchen the big black pot full of water was heated & one by one we were put into the ^{the} ~~the~~ cleanest ones first, when you have to bring water sometimes for a quarter of a mile you don't waste it on one bath.

Sunday the eldest went to Mass but it was too far for us ^{you} ~~you~~ so we wandered around ^{the} ~~the~~ looking for eggs & if the magpies found the nests first we would find only the shells, no one worked on Sunday ~~only~~ only to do the bare necessities, in the evenings some of the other farmers ^{sons} would ₃₈

come along - we listened to their tales,
but we didn't really hear it's piggy the
young do not hear.

Monday's man started washing as soon as her
other chores were done, she would still be
rubbing away on her wash board when we
returned from school, we had to bring water
from the well for drinking & cooking also
bring in the turf for the fire, help to
get dinner ready, next day Cissie & I
would help her iron the clothes.

She made all her own bread, she never
turned a beffan "away without help", she
loved Pa Paul a man of the road, to
visit because he had so much news, he
could tell everything that happened for miles
around - if anyone was ill she would
kill & pluck a chicken for them or send
some eggs along, she was what I always
think of as a "good woman", she took
everything in her stride.

In October the pig was to be killed for
winter bacon - Patrick Cunnemen arrived

the kitchen table had been scrubbed
white and taken into the yard - I stood
behind the haggard wall to watch.
The pig was brought into the yard, one
front leg & one back was held by a
rope, it was squalling.

When they got it near the table, Patrick
picked up a big stone breaking hammer,
he took one swipe at the pigs forehead
& it went down unconscious - in less time
than it takes to write - the pig was lifted
on to the table on its back.

Ed stood one side of the table, Mick on
the other side, Man stood with a white
enamel bucket, Patrick picked up a sword
like knife & in one moment he slit the
pigs throat, the blood gushed into the
bucket which Man held.

A pot of boiling water standing by
& was ^{over} ~~the~~ pig
& soon they were shaving the now
- dead pig.

The blood was mixed with pepper, salt bits of fat cut small, oatmeal, the intestines were cleaned thoroughly, first in clean water then left for some time in salt water, when this was finished they were filled with the mixture & boiled for about 4 hrs. Different parts of the pig was cut ^{up} & salted then placed in a large ^{wooden} barrel, the tender parts that was called pork-steak was cut into several parts & these were given, with a black pudding, to neighbours, then when the neighbour killed a pig they did likewise.

Soon it was time to dig potatoes, we children stayed away from school to pick & sort them, they were put into long heaps the good ones in one, the others for the fowl & pigs. When the potatoes were finished the turf was brought home from the bog - about 5 reels were piled high ^{up} & went back & forth until a great stack was all ready for a thatel of straw ready for winter.

Winter came early & with winter my chilblains started, & scratched & rubbed them one day Joan said "Come here" & went towards her as she stood by the door "See that cow? she asked "Yes" & was puzzled, "Take off your shoes & follow it, when it performs walk in it until it cools," "Agh!" & said "Go ahead" she answered, & slipped my shoes off & went over the wall into the cow field, soon the cow obliged, my feet were so uncomfortable that I stepped into the hot dung, the relief was unbelievable. I rubbed one foot around the other then ran through the wet grass letting it clean away the dung, you may say I'm lying but from that day on I never had a chilblain or any other foot trouble.

It was the goose was ready, some had gone to market but the best had been fattened, cakes were made, we children watched & looked forward to the moment they would be eaten.

~~Three~~ three large swedes were scooped out to make a big candel, these were lit

on Xmas Eve & placed in each window
& every night until "little Xmas" & far
there were lit as soon as it became
dark, Boxing Day the young men came
& went from far & wide they carried
a holly bush with a roan (or those
who didn't find a warranted cork with a
couple of feathers) perched on top, they
sang, the roan roan the king of all birds
one day was caught in the fuzzle
though he be little his family is great
rise up ran ladders & give us a treat,
then they would come in have a drink
take a couple of shilling offered & go
or to the next house.

Line went swiftly, the ice formed on the
water barrel but you had no choice
but break the ice & wash in it, you
face felt fresh & tingling - after when the
cold was less keen.

In Feb the flu came, it struck first one
& then another - people were dying & they
were frightened to go into a house where
it had already arrived, then swept down

with it first & had to go to bed within
3 days we were all in bed, there were 5 in
Mans bed my 3 youngest cousins Man & L.
The fever was head sweat soaked the bed
but there was only led to do anything, he
would get up from his bed & do what he
could & then return there again, Baby Mattie
was 10 months old, he was in his crib
by the fire -

On the third night Man jumped up in bed
- calling 'Led Led', he came in clothed only
in shirt & long John pants - "What is it?" he
- asked "Now is the baby", asked Man "He
is asleep", said Led "why?" "I had a dream,
the Mother of God was over my bed & she
had a baby in her arms but it was
Mattie, are you sure he's alright," Led went
out to the kitchen touch the sleeping
child, Mans dream was true, Mattie was
- dead.

Grandma worried she brought her best
white sheets, she wrapped one around
the crib & laid the baby out,
when she had finished - her chere's

she came back into the room, spoke to
Mam & then she said, "Come on get up
you are alright & you know where the
-goose lays out". I had found that a
few days before, "The mappis will get them."
I stuffed into some clothes feeling dread-
ful, she ^{it} went out
-came too, we found the nest
2 eggs ~~these~~ in it, when we returned
she scrambled some hen eggs & made
me sit at the table, "Eat", she said
I tried but the next moment I was
violently sick, "Go on back to bed", she
was angry & I didn't remember. In the
being taken for burial, I didn't remember
anything for days only a dreadful thirst.
Finally we were up again, so one looked
well, Mam was sick every morning, she
didn't seem to get her health back
she left a lot to be done by Essie
& I, we did our best with washing
& baking; my first loaf was like a
brick I had forgotten the soda but soon
made quite nice loaves.

Milk was very scarce, the winter cow had
been chased by dogs & "slung" its calf
so we had to wait for the Spring calf.
I fed pruzed daily for the cow to calve
then at last a lovely brown calf had
been born, Ted brought it into the
kitchen & placed it on a rack in front
of the fire. The first milk the cow
gave was yellow, like yellow cream,
Mam made some cakes with "some" &
they were delicious, she called it "Beastings".
The cold was going, she & I went too
& we were to go back to school
after Easter - Easter Sunday there was
excitement we were to have the "Stations"
the priest was to come & perform a
service, Ted was up early (Paddy)
The best table cloth covered the table
& brass candle sticks placed each end,
everywhere was epic "up", the sugar
chairs had been scrubbed with sand &
lime for the "Cowl" a broken down horse

The room was laid ready for a meal after the service, we went into the room for confession, then during the service we took communion & so your sins were washed away.

School was open again, we set off, still a bit weak from the flu, it was a lovely day with a ~~light~~ breeze, it caught the line stone dust of the road & we bowed to it, on each side of the road ~~the~~ ^{we} were covered with primroses & violets.

During the morning Master Lohme called on to his desk, "Tell your aunt I wish to see your father," he said, fear filled my soul, what had I done now?

It was nearly a month later my father came, I was recalled ^{from lessons} ~~out~~ after a while, Master Lohme was saying, "I cannot teach her any more - send her to college, she is worth it." My father's reply was, "If you can't teach her any more she knows enough!" that was my last day at school. I was 11.

My father drove back to Mrs's told her what she ^{had} asked said, she said she should let me go but he did not agree, then Mrs said, "An untrained, untamed colt is no good to anyone," you are wrong Jimmy, "I'll soon tame" her he answered.

My few clothes were packed & we were soon ~~on~~ ^{on} our way.

My father had acquired a horse, the "Lac" had died, Uncle Abick had gone with him the night of his death, they took a racket with them, smashed a window & taken "Lac" possession, it did not matter that the "Lac" was still there, ~~he~~ had been "kaid out" ready for the coffin to arrive next day, a hen flew of the end of the bed as they entered.

They were there about an hour when some one else arrived with the intention to do likewise but Uncle Dick & Pa stayed there, the hours later another family arrived, they

to, went away.

Next day the son arrived with the coffin, it could not be brought in so the "Lac" was taken out, ~~the~~ was pushed through the window & placed in the coffin in the garden, then the rest of our family arrived. It was taken to court to have them put out, Pa went to all his friends to sign a petition, saying they were most in need, the ~~with~~ ^{at} ~~case~~ ^{petition} ~~was~~ ^{dismissed} & they remained.

There & now I was on my way to join them. As ~~we~~ came to the top of the hill, the scent of lilac was heavy on the air, I looked down the hill, a little ~~village~~ ^{light} washed cottage stood surrounded by hills, five lilac trees in full bloom in the garden.

Two farm-houses were lying back across the field in front of the house, it looked like a picture of peace but that was soon shattered.

When tea was over Pa said, "You can get to bed now" it was only 6 o'clock, the sun was still shining but one did not disobey.

Pa,

He now had changed him, he was no longer the kindly Singing man I used to know.

Next day he collected his ferret from the box, placed it in a bag, then some nets in the other bag. "Here," he said to me, "Take this," he handed me the ferret, "You wanted to go ferreting, well now you can come on."

I followed him across the field until we saw a run with droppings, we followed the run till we came to the burrow, then he showed me how to place the nets, when he was satisfied that all was ready he let the ferret in. "Now when the rabbit comes out catch it & don't let go, if the ferret comes out catch it by the neck or by the tail & lift it quick otherwise it will bite you," he left me to watch a couple of the holes & went to ^{the} ~~see~~ ^{to} ~~the~~ ^{others}.
Soon the sun came

The burrow & a rabbit ran into the net
"Catched it damn you", yelled Pa, I caught
the net, the rabbit struggled, he came
over took the rabbit from the net, held it
by the hind legs gave it one stroke on
the back of the neck with the side of his
hand & said "Next time you do that, now"
watched for the ferret & do as I tell you."
When the ferret came out he placed it
back into the bag saying, "Its no use here
again today", so we went along to another
burrow & then another until we had 5 rabbits
"That will do today, there is always another
day", he sat down opened each rabbit &
cleaned it out, cut a hole in ^{each} leg & put
the "other through it", then handed them to
me. "Am going for a drink you can take those
home" & off he went.
They were heavy, my arms ached but I
pushed on until, I saw the cottage, I sat
for a while to rest my arms & layed
for the lovely dringlow we had left in
the sand. 51

Pa was soon friendly with all the farmers
we were useful to them, when the hay
was out we went out to help them also
he had made a "part" for the seed of
a field for the growing of the corn he
had agreed to weed & thin acres of
mayles & swedes, he took my brother & I
along on a hot day, he gave us a
stick about a foot or so long & told us
to leave that much space between each
plant to be left, it ~~must~~ be the largest
& best rooted ~~to be left~~, he watched
us for about an hour then off he went,
we had a bottle of tea & some sand,
niches for lunch,
The sun played down our arms & faces
were scorched when we left for home.
It was 4 days before we finished those
fields, by then we were brown as gipsys
& girls did not get brown those days.
We were on our way home when we met
some girls, all pink & white, they gave us
look ~~at~~ us & one said "blod yellow face"
52

I felt terrible, the tears were not far off, she had tossed her curls & looked at me with scorn, then my pride returned, I'd show them!!

That night I curled my hair with rags. We could go to any farm & were given milk but butter had to be bought.

Whenever I could I went to Cummins, they were second cousins of my father's Mary & Ann Patrick & Corry, old Mr Cummins had some trouble with one eye, he always called me "Honore & one" said "By, but you are a wild one".

The house was large & the girls had flowers in a walled front garden, at the back was an orchard. One day Patrick came in "These will I piglets in" his hands, "These isn't have to go," he said, "There isn't enough room for them," "What are you

going to do with them," I asked. "They will have to be killed, the sow had too many."

"Can I have them," he looked at me & laughed, "You can have them but you won't rear them," "I will," "Well, I'll be surprised if you do."

Arriving home with the piglets in a basket my mother said, "What do you think you are going to do with them,"

"I'm going to rear them," I got a saucer of warm milk put my little finger into the piglets mouth & held it in the saucer, it started to suck then

I did the same with the other, I put them into a box with hay & a warm rag & during the night had to get up & feed them again, each day they looked more healthy & in two weeks were drinking without help, soon

put into a shed, later they were sold
as 8th pigs.
John Blume came to the home one day,
after a conversation with Pa & Ma I
was sent with him, I was to look
after his 2 children & help his wife
with other chores.

That night I had - for the first time
in my life - a bed of my own, I threw
myself fully clothed on the bed & in
a few moments I was fast asleep -
next morning when John put his head
in the doorway to call me I was
still fully dressed - ~~at that time~~ ^{I was} only
I should be at school but here
I was doing a woman's work, the
help I was to give his wife included
feeding pigs, fowl & calves, bringing the
water from the well, the turf from the
rick, washing the potatoes for the animals
2 big Pots full - I did not milk the cows.

I was there about 6 months, my 12
birthday came & went unnoticed.
Then came the day the calf was taken
ill. Lem, the man who worked there, &
John brought it into the kitchen, they
placed a glass with some medicine
in it on the table while they turned
the calf on its back, child like &
watched them & not the little boy,
while our back was turned he
had swallowed the lot.

"God almighty", yelled John & packed
him up, he forced his finger down
his neck until he started to vomit
"Get out" he ~~yelled~~ shouted, he was
now holding the child upside down it
was still being sick.

I took to my heels ran across the
field's never stopping until I reached

home, "What are you doing here," asked
Ma, I told her what had happened
she said, "Oh well, I can do with you
at home for awhile,"
A few days later my second sister was
born - she was a squaller, she
never stopped, when Ma put her to
sleep & what out for an hour, she
would wake in a short time & then
yell, you ~~could~~ tried to cuddle her, she
just screamed all the more, I
would walk up & down with her &
in the end I would cry too, so
when a week or so later when I
went to work again I was glad.

This time it was frosts there were
4 children, the youngest was only 2
weeks old.

I had never bathed a small baby
but the next ~~day~~ ^{the 2nd week} ~~old~~ was brought
down to me to bathe, I was terrified

this small slippery child nearly went
through my hands but after a few days
I had more confidence & soon found
it much easier, she was a good baby
& seldom cried.

Time went by, each Sunday evening I
was given a few hours off & went
home.

Sunday evenings Boston had a "bit
of a dance", Mrs Boston played a
concertina & a few of the local farm
boys & ^{stand outside} this girl friends went there
I would listen to the music & wish
to dance but had been warned

never to go in, I stayed until one
night two young men came out & on
seeing me said, "Here's one," I before
I had a chance to say anything
there I was, they were looking for partners.
The first man to dance with me

compared me to a steam engine, he was covered in perspiration but I soon got the hang of it, the only trouble was I was scared my parents would find out because one of my brothers friends was there, I asked him not to tell but he went out of his way to let them know - it was six weeks before I went home again by then my wages were due, I did not go to London again although the music would haunt me for hours after going to bed, Bridgie did the heavy work, she was very like Babby, noisy faced & happy go lucky, Bill was the man who helped he had a large mustache & called everyone "my old B O V", he was an ex soldier, he slept in a room off the kitchen & when the weather was

frosty he would bring his shirt to the fire to thaw it out, he never had a cold or cough. One day we had to get a room ready as a young man was coming to learn how to be a farmer, B & P were very anxious to see him, he was to have meals with the boss & his wife, Bridgie took breakfast in & came out laughing, she would not say why but later when Richard came into the kitchen I knew why. He was dressed in a pair of white riding breeches & carried a cane. Where in Gods name did he think he had come to, Bill looked him up & down then turned away & looked open mouthed - he was a thin spotted young man, a soldiers son,

He soon found life in the kitchen was more friendly than the sitting room & often joined us in the evening. One evening I was teaching the eldest child his catechism "Thou shalt not," I came to "Thou shalt not commit adultery," "What is adultery?" I asked "Didn't you learn," asked Bridget. "Yes but what is it really?" Bridget thought for a moment & then said, "Any unclean thought, word or deed," Richard said, "Come down to the hay shed & I'll show you," "Don't you dare," said Bridget.

More than a year passed by I had reached my 14th birthday & asked if I could have a day off to go & see Mam again - it was about 7 miles to Dangan, it was a lovely day when I set off, I had walked

a mile when the boss came along on his bike, "Jump up behind," he said so I stood on the step until we came to Kilkishin, then he said I better walk. The village was almost deserted as everyone was at Mass. I went into the chapel & heard half the Mass then set off on the rest of the journey.

Mam gave me a wonderful welcome said how I had grown, it was a lovely day it went too quickly then Mam said, "Stay the night, the lads have a few wheels up later," shame to say I didn't need twice asking. We had a grand night some-one played a fiddle & a dozen of us danced, I loved dancing & could have gone on all night, it must

have been 12 o'clock before we went to bed alas next day it rained & rained, "you can't go home in this" said Inan, so I stopped another night. It stopped raining about 11 o'clock the next day so I started home, I stopped to look through the woods & found a cave, as I had no lamp & it was dark so I left it for another day, I never went back there though. It was about six o'clock before I walked in, Bridgy was in the kitchen. "Where on earth have you been" she asked "they know at home you have been away for 2 days & are setting off to look for you - you better go to bed & then if they come in you will be out of the way," she then sent

Bill to tell my parents I had come back - it had never entered my empty head that any one would worry.

First day I was hanging some washing on the hedge, when I looked along the avenue, to behold Inan was dashing along, her leather ^{gladstone bag} swinging, she got near, she look on her face was enough, I started to run for the nearest tree, I knew she could not climb but I could, the portmanteau passed my head by a few inches, she had quite a good aim. I forget how long I stopped away from home then, I think I did not go until they said I was to leave - why!!

Bridgy had a young man he came from "up the mountain" she went out with him - sometimes she would call

for her.
Easter Sunday we were walking home from Mass when this knavery happened to say, "You are putting on a bit of weight Bridget," Bridget laughed until we were walking along the avenue then she asked when my brother was going to town I told her they went every week so she asked if I could bring her a message when she went again, I gave her note to my brother, she wanted a corset, within a couple of weeks I was home again - 5 in a bed it was awful - legs & arms everywhere I was thankful to go to work again. This time it was a "Gentleman Farmers," about 3 weeks went by then all hell let loose, Bridget had barricaded herself in a box room & given birth

to a baby girl she would never tell who the father was nor would she ever marry the young man she had been going with, she left & later went to Dublin, I never heard of her again.

By now I was growing up. & aware of all the troubles around —!

It was an I.R.A. County & some of the things were of a great shock.

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R. K. Brain

If, in my youth, Oh Lord, you had
given me the wisdom of age,
With good deeds I may have filled
this Page,

The words would flow like water,
Trusted - they stop & like my footsteps
falter,

As on the way, I had heeded words
then spoken,

There would be no sorrow in the
heart's so broken,

The tears that flow will not heal the
hurt,

For foolish deeds can never be recalled,
For unkind words forgotten,

Pain weaves the heart & clouds the brow.

where has our great strength gone
Somewhere along life's road we left
it all behind,

The legs that once could run for
miles or dance the night away,

The hands that worked from dawn till
dusk

Now idle lay, the will is there but the

limbs will not obey,
The eyes that once could read a book

Now scarcely see the page,

And thus, my friend is age,

There's not much joy in age my friend,

No matter what folks say & I
would gladly change with youth, if

I had my way.

It was hot the sun burned down on my face & soon the only cool part of me was my bare feet as they sank into the soft peat bog where I had moved the seeds to foot the turf.

I stood for a moment to ease my aching back and as I did so saw 2 men cutting some a bit further away.

Suddenly they stopped, one took off his cap & Blessed himself, "Holy Christ its Mac Tomney" he spoke louder than he meant to because my father heard him too, he left his patch & went towards them, they were all looking down at something, I went to see what it was but was told "Go back & get on with your job", growled Pa "you did not disobey Him."

When he came back the two men were covering up whatever they had found, when they finished they walked over & one said, "Say nothing", Pa agreed.

When we stopped to have our tea, hot & smoky, it was a relief to sit down for a while, "who was Mac Tomney" I asked, "what are you talking about", Pa was frowning "those men" I started to say but he cut in sharply, "it was a calf".

I might be only 11 but I knew what I had heard. Then as an after thought he said, "Mac Tomney went to America a long time ago", but I knew he was in the bog.

A few years after when I queried who was Mac, all I could get was he had gone off to America. Several years past it always at the back of my mind was the scene at the bog.

One day I went to visit my grandparents who lived a mile or so away from the bog, I saw Uncle Tom making his way across the field I stood by the wooden gate to wait for him also to admire the "more & foot" that followed him.

"Hallo" he said "Havent seen you for ages, how youve grown, quite a young lady now eh", we stood for a

Mount
talking, in the distance a white farmhouse was almost the only house to be seen "who lives there?" I asked, he hesitated a while then said "Pawletts now, it used to belong to Mac Lowrey", who was Mac Lowrey, I asked, "Oh, he was a fellow who went off to America some years ago", "are you sure?" I asked, "why do you ask that?" he said, "I was about to tell him of the day long ago when Grandpa came around the corner, she frowned when she saw me, I was not her favourite granddaughter, "what's keeping you your tea is ready" she spoke only to Uncle Mike, then turning to me said "I may as well come in & have some."

I was longing to ask more but had no chance, as the years went by I left for another part of the country & forgot about the things that had happened till one day Uncle Philip came to visit us, we were talking about people & places in Ireland, then I asked the same question "who was Mac Lowrey", "It's a long & sad story" he started, "I was only a lad at the time, his wife was ill so they took his wife's niece from the convent to help in the house she looked after her aunt, when she became worse & died, he hesitated & had a far away look, then he continued "well some time after Mac got her into trouble, he wanted to marry her but when he went to the priest he refused & banned him from the church, soon nobody would sell him anything so he decided to go to America & they would be able to marry there - one day he set off to arrange things but he never came back."

She wanted & wanted but no word came from him one night she came to the mother & asked her for God's sake to help her the mother sent me for the priest & next day she had a son,

I did not see her for some time of the day I did I did not know what to do as I had been forbidden to talk to her, she was little more than a girl but she looked like an old woman, she stopped

me & asked if I would get her some thing to eat at the shops, I knew the shops would not serve her, she saw me hesitate & went down on her knees & said "Please Philip help me". She handed me a 'L' & told me what she wanted, I went from shop to shop & bought the things I didn't dare go to, just one shop when I took them to her she was in the yard, I wanted to get away quick in case some one saw me & told the mother but she said come in & see the baby I went in & as long as I live I shall never forget it - it had a huge head & great big eyes, I left & ran home, remember I was only a lad & scared. He stopped them so I asked what had become of her after, "I was sent to the naval school soon after that & when I went home again she was gone the baby had died & she went to Dublin they told me & that's all I know, she never heard from Mac she could never understand why he had deserted her when she needed him so badly".

I wanted to tell him about the day on the bog but we were interrupted so I left it for then.

Some ten years later I went to Ireland with my sister & told her the story, she didn't really believe me but when we visited an old friend she insisted I ask him about it all so I did "Remember Mac Lonsiey", I asked, "Yes he said, "He got his niece in trouble & then went off to America". "He didn't", I said quietly, "He is in the bog", he looked at me for some time before he spoke again, then said "Yes he's in the bog or so is she after the baby died she got up one morning made a cup of tea & went out & threw herself in a bog hole". That was something I'd never even thought of & my sister was quite shaken, it seems some of

heads had way laid Mac on his way home &
threw him into one & if you know bog holes
you know the slippery sides give you no
grip so you just stay there unless you are
lucky enough to be pulled out & Mac
waited.

So after 50 years of probing I had got the
answer to what had really happened to
Mac Loney. True story.

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